

Gender Differentials in Economic Security & Functional Health Status of Elderly in India

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Abstract

The burgeoning elderly populations in India face a high prevalence of chronic diseases, accompanied by inability or reduced ability to perform key activities such as walking, brushing, etc. These functional limitations impact their quality of life, besides having repercussions for morality, functional health and morale. While several factors predispose elderly towards these limitations, previous studies have found that women are more likely to experience these limitations. Women, however, may lack the adequate social and economic infrastructure to deal with these limitations. Thus, there may be a need to carefully examine the factors leading up to the incidence of functional limitations. The present study assesses the relationship between gender-stratified wealth status and functional limitations in India. We find that elderly women are not only worse off economically, they are also more likely to have lower quality of life stemming from functional limitations. Other factors contributing to poor functional health status include age, education and marital status of the respondents.